



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Serena McIlwain, Secretary Designate
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary

February 15, 2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2W
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 392 - Wastewater Facility Supplemental Operations and Maintenance Grant Program - Establishment

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed Senate Bill 392 and would like to provide the following information.

SB 392 creates a new competitive grant program for publicly owned enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) that are facing staffing shortages, maintenance backlogs, and other operations and maintenance challenges. The grant program would be administered by MDE's Maryland Water Infrastructure Financing Administration (MWIFA). The bill would limit grant awards to not more than \$3,000,000. Each grant agreement must include conditions to ensure the grant funds are used for the purposes specified in the agreement and the effectiveness of the measures implemented must be evaluated.

MWIFA currently administers the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) Operation & Maintenance (O&M) grant program. This program provides up to \$11M annually in funding to WWTPs that meet and exceed ENR levels of treatment. This new program would be similar to, but more involved than the existing BRF O&M program. It will have a somewhat different focus and would target a subset of the total ENR WWTPs statewide.

If the bill were to pass, MWIFA would award grants to qualifying WWTPs for any purpose related to staff hiring and retention and operations and maintenance, including: public outreach, apprenticeships, continuing education, training, salary adjustments, bonuses, preventative maintenance, predictive maintenance practices, and asset management systems.

Thank you for considering the Department's information regarding this legislation. We will continue to monitor SB 392 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at gabrielle.leach@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Leach
cc: The Honorable Cory McCray